DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 238 059 CS 504 478

AUTHOR	Watt, Phyllis
TITLE	Television Cameras in Congress. Freedom of Information Center Report No. 483.
INSTITUTION	Freedom of Information Center, Columbia, Mo.
REPORT NO	FOI-483
PUB DATE	Nov 83
NOTE	9p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Freedom of Information Center, Box 858, Columbia, MO 65205 ($1.00 each, quantity discounts available).
PUB TYPE	Information Analyses (070) -- Viewpoints (120)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Cable Television; *Federal Government; Legislators; Mass Media Effects; *News Media; *News Reporting; *Television
IDENTIFIERS	*House of Representatives; Media Role; Media Use; *Senate

ABSTRACT

While the United States Senate debates the merits of televising its proceedings, it might consider as a model the House of Representatives, which has televised floor activities since 1979 with no dramatic changes in those activities or in members' behavior. The House system consists of inconspicuously placed cameras and microphones operated by remote control from outside the chamber. The cameras focus only on the speaker and do not pan unrelated activities or operate during roll call vote. A proposal for Senate coverage calls for similar discrete nonnetwork operation. Although many political scientists believe the Senate will adapt to being televised as easily as the House has, critics in the Senate contend that television will adversely affect both floor attendance and the length and quality of debate, and that news networks will use footage unfavorably. Even though the proceedings are not particularly entertaining, evidence suggests that many people watch the House debates on C Span, a cable network. Besides being a valuable educational tool for constituents and students, taped sessions would also prove useful to historians and political scientists, all reasons for the Senate to enact the resolution for television. (HTH)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Freedom of Information Center
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM, UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI AT COLUMBIA
NOVEMBER, 1983

ED238059

TELEVISION CAMERAS IN CONGRESS

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION CENTER REPORT NO. 483

This report was written by Phyllis Watt, an M.A. graduate of the University of Missouri School of Journalism.

When they are running for office, U.S. senators love television cameras. When they have approved an important bill, they seek the cameras out or tape themselves for their hometown television stations. But when the cameras want to come into the Senate chamber, many senators balk. A flood of arguments about the body's distinctive deliberate nature or its unique procedural system fill the chamber. Senators question the adverse effect television might have on floor attendance and the length and quality of debates. Some see televised floor debates as merely an extension of the public gallery. Others see it as a catalyst to transform the ritualistic Senate.

While senators debate the merits of televising the chamber proceedings, cameras are rolling on the other side of the Capitol. The U.S. House of Representatives has televised floor activities with its own cameras since 1979. Although the two houses differ in procedure and composition, the television experience in the House can shed some light on the question senators have raised.

Overall, television has brought no dramatic changes to floor activities or members' behavior. Network use of tapes from the House has allayed fears that the media would abuse the availability of floor debates. Use by cable networks and schools have fueled the hope that access to government can enlighten the governed.

BACKGROUND

Congress has considered broadcasting its proceedings for nearly as long as the broadcasting industry has existed. In 1922, the early days of radio, a Michigan congressman introduced a resolution calling for broadcasts of House and Senate debate. In the 1940s, Sen. Claude Pepper of Florida tried, without success, to persuade his colleagues to broadcast and televise floor proceedings.

But the image-conscious politicians could not ignore radio and television for long. After 30 million viewers turned in to watch Sen. Estes Kefauver's 1951 hearings on organized crime, the Senate was sold on televising committee hearings.[1]

The House, on the other hand, was not that easily convinced. Speaker Sam Rayburn ruled in 1952 that neither floor proceedings nor committee hearings could be broadcast unless a rule was adopted to do so. Not until 1970 were House committee hearings broadcast.[2] In the meantime, the Senate had grown accustomed to the camera and microphone in committee. The Army-McCarthy hearings on communism in 1954, the Vietnam hearings in 1966 and the Watergate hearings highlighted the Senate's experience with the broadcast media.[3]

But it was the House that first regularly opened its doors to television and radio. (The Senate did allow cameras into its chamber for the swearing-in of Vice President Nelson Rockefeller in 1974 and permitted radio stations to broadcast the 1978 Panama Canal Treaties debates.

The House provided gavel-to-gavel coverage of floor proceedings as of February 19,1979. The move to televise House proceedings started rolling after Joint Committee on Congressional Operations hearings in 1974. The committee recommended that both houses consider broadcasting floor activity. In 1975, the three commercial networks and PBS tested the House chamber for lighting and pledged to pool resources for a broadcasting system. Legislation to that effect rejected, however, because leaders opposed the networks' control of the equipment. In 1977, House Speaker Thomas P. O'Neil, Jr., used House personnel to conduct a test of televised proceedings. Only the in-house televisions in members' offices could pick up the signal. Members liked the system and approved a resolution authorizing it. Radio coverage began June 12, 1978. TV cameras came the next year, after lighting changes and camera installation were completed.

The House system consists of six color studio cameras that focus on the Speaker's desk, the tables of the Majority and Minority leaders and the microphones in the House well, from which members address the House. The cameras

Summary:

While the U.S. Senate agonizes about the effect televising the chamber might have, political scientists and representatives agree that television has not dramatically altered the House. The use of House footage for educational purpose is also reassuring.

CS504478

are operated by remote-control from a room in the basement of the Capitol. Thus, the congressmen on the floor see nothing more than a few cameras, painted to match the background, discreetly placed around the House chamber. The cameras show nothing more than the representative speaking – they do not pan the chamber to catch congressmen sleeping or shown empty chairs. During rollcall votes, the cameras are turned off lest members decide to change their votes in the middle of the roll call. Neal Gregory, former information policy liaison for the House Administration Committee, recounted two events when the networks would have shot a sequence differently than the House cameras did.

In one instance Speaker O'Neil chided a member for coming to the floor without a coat and tie. The cameras focused only on the Speaker, not on the reprimanded representative and his reaction. Gregory said networks would certainly have focussed on the member in his shirt sleeves. In another case, a man jumped from the gallery onto the House floor. House cameras caught only the surprised Speaker, not the jumper. Nevertheless, O'Neil's startled expression made the evening news.[5]

Gregory told the Senate Rules and Administration Committee (May 5, 1981) that House control of the cameras allows for proper use of the television system. "The reason you need a television system is to record the events, not report the events; the official speakers and those who respond, not byplay in the corridor or back at the rail..."

The Senate committee proposed a similar system for televising the Senate floor. The proposal provides for gavel-to-gavel coverage "to be an informative documentary and not a staged performance, and is to be free from editorial analysis."[6] Like the House system, the cameras will focus only on the person speaking. This presents problems in the Senate, where every Senator speaks from his own desk and can move around the floor at will. In the House, members speak only from designated spots. Cameras and additional lighting focus on these spots.

Gregory White, Architect of the Capitol, told the Senate committee (April 8, 1981) that cameras could be "pre-focused" on the desks of each senator and shifted by a computarized program or by manual operators. The lighting in the Senate chamber would have to be increased, but White assured the committee that increased lighting wouldn't affect the temperature in the chamber.

The Senate proposal provides for a one-to-three month test period in which six remote-control cameras would tape proceedings for broadcast in Senate offices. The proposal was drafted after attempts to pass an unspecific resolution reached a stalemate.

Since the first days of the 1981 session, Majority Leader Howard Baker, R-Tenn., has made it clear that he wants to televise Senate proceedings. After three hearings on the issue, the Senate Rules Committee reported a resolution to that effect on August 13, 1981. Baker took the measure to the Senate floor in February 1982. But from the first day of the debate on a procedural motion to consider the resolution, Baker knew he would have trouble with it.

Sen. Russel Long, D-La., expressed concerns about the impact of television on the length of speeches senators would make. Sens. Patrick Moynihan, D-N.Y., and Jack Danfourth, R-Mo., warned of danger to the "deliberative" nature of Senate debates. Such concerns had arisen in committee hearings, but the thinking of television proponents like committee chairman Charles Mathias, R-Md., had prevailed. On the Senate floor, however, one voice silenced the proponents.

Long allowed the procedural motion to pass, but filibustered so that the resolution could not come to a vote. A senator may speak against a topic as long as he likes until 60 of his colleagues, three-fifths of the Senate, vote to end the filibuster. When Baker failed to find the votes to shut up Long in February,he withdrew the resolution. In April,1982, Baker reopened debate on the meausre and Long picked up where he had left off. After days of Long's speeches, Baker called for a cloture vote to end the filibuster, but came up 13 votes short. Rather than go through further cloture votes, Baker and Long compromised. The Senate unanimously approved the resolution on the condition that the Mathias committee develop guidelines for implementing television in the chamber. Had the Senate approved these guidelines, the system would have begun its test period about six months after approval. Baker's only alternative would be to start all over again, possibly in the next Congress.

As it turned out, the resolution was not considered in that session because the weeks after the elections were packed with important legislation and budget decisions.[7] Ernie Schultz, executive director of Radio-Television News Directors Association, was prepared to lobby for the measure. Schultz said the lobbying effort required attention to each senator.[8]

IMPACT OF TELEVISION

Many arguments against televising Congressional proceedings concern the impact of television on floor activity and behavior. Will senators rush to the floor to appear on television? Will they speak endlessly, hoping the network news will notice them? Will debate deteriorate into quips and quotable one-liners? Will the Senate have to change its intricate procedures to accomodate the television audience?

Each of these questions came up when the House was contemplating television coverage. Research into floor attendance and the length and quality of House debates has uncovered no cataclysmic changes in House proceedings. The Senate, of course, is a different body with different rules, but many political scientists believe the Senate will adapt to television as easily as the House has.

FLOOR ATTENDANCE

> It might be that many of us are forced, or compelled for survival purposes...to be there in that chamber and neglecting other important work: meeting people in our offices, attending the committees.

Virginia Sen. John Warner's words at the first committee hearing on televising floor activity (April 8, 1981), expresses a concern felt by many U.S. senators. Warner and others believe television will draw them onto the Senate floor, away from pressing duties. "I think that the nature of televison is to attract us to it, like sugar," Danforth said in a floor debate on February 2, 1982. He told of a day when he had two committee hearings at the same time: one a hearing on Bert Lance's indiscretions, the other on a major tax bill. Because the Lance hearings were televised, Danforth said he spent more time than necessary there. Senators would flock to the Senate chamber for the same reason, Danforth said.

This reasoning ignores two considerations: Televising the House proceedings has not dramatically affected attendance in the House chamber, and there is nothing inherently wrong with senators spending more time on the floor.

Although no studies have determined actual numbers or hours for floor attendance, a 1979 House Administration Committee survey revealed members' impressions of their attendance. Of the 297 members who responded to the survey, 68 percent said televised proceedings had not changed their attendance behavior at all. Only 3 percent said they spent more time on the floor and 23 percent said they spent less time there. Seventeen percent said their colleagues spent more time in the chamber, while 21 percent said attendance was down.[9]

Many of those who do not attend floor debates watch from their offices on closed-circuit television. The survey found that four out of five members "often" watch floor debates on television. Rep. Michael Barnes,D-Md., observed the advantages of television shortly after the House went on-the-air:

> It used to be that all a representative knew about the vote he was running to cast was "If it's Tuesday, this must be Fisheries Management...." But it's not quite so superficial anymore. It's on TV. If the member is in his office...he can leave the television turned on... and follow what's going on... . I think the case can finally be made that Congress has finally found a way to keep up with itself.[10]

In the survey of members, 56 percent said they are better informed about issues since the House began televising proceedings. This knowledge has helped members assert some independence from party leaders and committees, according to Michael J. Robinson, a political scientist who directs the Media Analysis Project at George Washington University. "If members themselves know what is happening, they need rely less on the other forces which have traditionally affected their performance on the floor," he wrote.[11] This effect would probably not be as pronounced in the Senate if that body chose to televise its proceedings, because senators tend to be more aware of activities on the floor, Robinson said.[12]

Even if television drew senators into the chamber like "moths fascinated by the candls of television,"[13] proponents of the resolution see no harm in greater attendance. Baker, in fact, said he hopes that television will bring senators back to the floor for debates. In a committee hearing on his resolution(April 8, 1982), Baker said:

> We aren't really much of a deliberative body in the sense of the great debates of other ages and eras are the exception rather than the rule. But we might be again. The Senate is filled with talent, it is filled with intelligent and compassionate and powerful men and women. But we so often fritter away that talent and that opportunity by the routine and the ordinary, to an empty Senate Chamber in a debate by a few.

Opponents argue that the most important work goes on in committee, and that they cannot afford the time on the floor. Robinson, the political scientist, said he sees no reason why participation in floor debate is necessarily a waste of time. "And perhaps it will keep them off the front steps of the U.S. Senate talking to the news media," he added.

LENGTH OF DEBATE

> The greatest surplus commodity we have in Congress are speeches that need never have been made, speeches that fail to improve on silence.
> Sen. Russell Long,Feb. 2, 1982.

Coming from Sen. Long, the man who filibustered to keep the Senate from considering television, those words may sound slightly ironic. Long based his endless speeches against Baker's resolution on the contention that television would produce endless speeches. He said every senator would rush to speak out on every controversial issue for fear that his constituents would wonder why he didn't. Also, those senators seeking the presidency would use the Senate floor as a campaign podium, Long said. Senate rules provide no means short of cloture, for controlling the length of a floor debate.

In the House, where debate is controlled by the Rules Committee and party leaders, members assert that the cameras do not bring them to the podium more often. Although few of the members surveyed in 1979 admitted they had made more speeches in front of the cameras, 77 percent believed that cameras had influenced their colleagues to do so. The most pronounced effect television has had on floor behavior comes in the early morning one-minute speeches. Traditionally, representatives may address the chamber at the start of the legislative day on any matter they choose. New members have often used one-minute speeches to gain experience in addressing the House.[14] With the advent of television, the speeches have become a concise, well-timed vehicle for addressing constituents. Since the speeches come early in the day, local and network news have time to sift through the tape for the evening news.[15] In three months of the 1978 session, members gave 368 one-minute speeches. In the same three months of the televised 1979 session, members gave 574 speeches.

The increase in one-minute speeches is clearly linked to television, says Don Wolfensberger, who has analysed data on floor activity. Wolfensberger, minority counsel for the House Subcommittee on the Legislative Process, said the increase in the short speeches had produced some positive effects for party unity. Party leaders can learn where members stand on issues. Or leaders can set the tone on an issue and be reinforced by a series of one-minute speeches from party members.[16] On the day the House overrode the president's veto of the supplemental appropriations bill, 29 Congressmen denounced the veto in one-minute speeches. In those years, 1979 and 1980, the Republicans constantly attacked Carter. In 1981, Democrats went on the offensive against the Reagan administration and outstripped their Republican counterparts in one-minute speeches.[17]

Aside from the one-minute speech phenomenon, Wolfensberger found that television had not seriously affected the length of floor proceedings. He compared the 95th session of Congress to the televised 96th session and found that the House met for nearly the same number of days in each two-year period. But the later Congress considered fewer bills and resolutons (16 percent fewer) and spent more time on each measure (8.4 percent more).[18] Wolfensberger said television may have contributed to longer debates on issues, but other factors also influence the time allotted each measure. He cited the increasing partisanship in Congress, the emotive nature of issues like abortion or busing, the com-

plexity of fiscal matters, and the increasing participation of younger members.[19]

Long argued on the Senate floor that the House experience does not necessarily mean anything for the Senate. The length and extent of House debates are prescribed. After a bill emerges from committee, the Rules Committee determines how long the debate on the bill can last and how many amendments can be added. The Senate has no such control. Any senator may speak his beliefs until 60 colleagues vote to shut him up. The filibuster, defined by rule 22, hs allowed senators to delay votes on such controversial issues as civil rights, abortion and televising the Senate.

Long expressed less concern about filibustering and more about throw-away speeches delivered to placate constituents. He said a senator might address every controversial issue lest his consstituents think he was not looking out for their interests. But political scientist Robinson sees nothing wrong with each senator contributing to the debate. "Why shouldn't they put their two cents in on the Senate floor," he said. "The truth is they would rather pander off the floor than on the floor."[20]

Roger Davidson, senior specialist in American government and public administration for the Congressional Research Service, said television actually might tighten Senate debate. "Senators might realize after 10 or 15 or 30 minutes that the impact of their speech would begin to wane," Davidson said. He noted that national party conventions have become more concise and direct since the introduction of television onto the convention floor.[21] Similarly, senators might speak more concisely to appeal to constituents, said Sen. Larry Pressler, R-S.D. Pressler, who served in the House when the television system began, said (Feb. 3, 1982) "If our speeches are too long, that will be apparent to people and they can make their judgment on us."

QUALITY OF DEBATE

> Are we going to be propelled, now with a mighty spurt foward, to more frantic action, to the one-liners, to oversimplifications, to color? Sen. Jack Danforth, Feb. 2, 1982.

Danforth and other senators have expressed more concern about the quality of debate than about the length of speeches. If, as Pressler says, people will judge their senator by the length of his speech, will senators reduce their orations to clever, but meaningless statements? If that happens, what will become of the Senate's deliberative nature, which Moynihan describes as:

> a body for reconsideration, a body to check enthusiasms that can be, like any such exhortation, ill-considered; a body where a minority can hold off long enough on a decision to let the Nation itself reconsider and, in fact, for the other body (the House) to as well.

Bearing in mind that the House is more representative than deliberative in nature, one can still derive some indications about what effect television might have on the tenor of floor debate. Although few House members said they had changed their speaking style for preparation for television, 64 percent of those responding to the 1979 survey believed that a few of their colleagues had. Observers note that congressmen tend to prepare speeches more and dress better than before television. Charlie Rose, D-N.C., chairman of the Speaker's Advisory Committee on Broadcasting, told the Senate Rules Committee (April 9, 1982) that television had improved the quality of House debate:

> If you have very little to say and put a lot of wind behind it, television picks that up far quicker than sometime does the printed page; and therefore, I find members more precise and more cautious, just as we are all very cautious when we are in an interview with our local television station.... And I think we're getting better speeches.

When asked about the content of House debate after television, 20 percent of the respondents said the debate was less substantive; 15 percent said it was more substantive; and 37 percent found it more partisan. If television had a dramatic effect on the House, the members didn't notice.

Sen. Baker said he hopes television will have a more dramatic effect on the other side of the Capitol. With the prominence of committee decisions and the poor attendance in the chamber, Baker said the Senate floor had become merely "a place for ratification of actions that take place outside the Chamber," (Feb. 2, 1982). He suggested setting up debates on controversial issues to draw senators into the chamber for deliberations and to set off the fiery battles of the nineteenth century Senate.

USE BY MEDIA

> It is simply a matter of whether the Senate should be moving more in the direction of deliberation, consideration of the big questions, or more in the direction of trying to get ourselves on the evening news. Sen. Jack Danforth, Feb. 2, 1982.

The arguments for and against televising the Senate assume that networks will readily use footage from the Senate floor. This simply has not been the case with tape from House proceedings. With a few exceptions, the major networks rarely use much footage from the House.

The three commercial networks – ABC, CBS and NBC – receive the House signal by microwave and telephone lines. The networks videotape the signal so that they can draw a clip from it if needed. A comparison of news coverage of the House in 1977 and 1979 reveals that televised proceedings did not significantly alter the coverage given to the House.[22] The three networks ran 95 stories about the House in 1977 and 112 in 1979, an 18 percent increase. In the same time, the number of stories on the untelevised Senate jumped 130 percent, from 74 to 170. The networks did begin devoting slightly more time to House stories. The average story in 1977 was 1.32 minutes and in 1979 was 1.82 minutes. Even if the networks wanted to carry long sections of floor debate, union contracts preclude NBC and ABC from airing more than three minutes of the House proceedings at one time.[23]

Cable News Network and Public Broadcasting System have put House footage to better use. CNN has shown in entirety: expulsion proceedings for Rep. Charles Diggs and Rep. Ozzie Myers; the opening of the 97th Congress; the 1981 debate on the debt ceiling and debates on the budget; as well as shortened versions of debates on other issues. On WETA, the Washington, D.C., PBS channel, public affairs shows such as the "MacNeil-Lehrer Report," "Bill Moyers Journal," and "The Lawmakers" have used longer clips from

the House floor. Moyers once used a 14-minute segment from floor debate on Federal Trade Commission regulations.[24]

In radio, National Public Radio has led the pack in using audio directly from the House floor. NPR also has broadcast from the Senate. For 38 days in 1978, NPR provided live coverage of Senate debates on the Panama Canal Treaties. Audience estimates suggest that 10 million people listened to the first three days of the debate.[25] Sen. Wendell Ford, D-Ky., has offered an amendment to Baker's resolution that the Senate should allow only radio coverage of its proceedings. The Senate Rules Committee voted that down. Ernie Schultz of the news directors association said his group didn't find Ford's proposal very satisfactory either. Schultz said people tend to listen to radio in short spurts and wouldn't tune in for long debates.

The real leader in broadcasting House floor proceedings is C-SPAN, the Cable-Satellite Public Affairs Network. C-SPAN picks up the signal from the House and sends it by cable and microwave to a satellite, which then transmits the signal to local cable stations serving more than 11 million homes in 1000 communities. C-SPAN is financed by 24 cable companies as a public service. "All we are is a public service," says C-SPAN president Brian Lamb. "We're not in the ratings business. We're not in the audience business. We are one place people can turn to watch their government."[26] C-SPAN began transmitting the complete House proceedings about a month after the House made the signal available. In addition, C-SPAN has covered confirmation hearings, governors conferences, National Press Club luncheons and nearly 1000 hours of House and Senate committee hearings. Lamb said the network would broadcast Senate proceedings if the signal were available. C-SPAN plans to start a second channel. If the Senate approved plans for television, C-SPAN could broadcast proceedings live on the second channel. Highlights from the House and Senate could be broadcast on the original network at night. C-SPAN recently extended its hours into the evening.

PUBLIC EDUCATION

> I think we would contribute in a significant way to the body of information that could be metabolized and digested by the people of this country to put them in a position to express their views and judgments. Sen. Howard Baker, April 8, 1981.

Baker and Lamb agree that the ultimate reason for televising Senate proceedings is for the public's good. Dubbed "Dullsville D.C." by Variety magazine, the House proceedings are rather dry to pass as entertainment. But viewers calling in and the schools and communities tuning in affirm that gavel-to-gavel C-SPAN coverage of the House has taught the citizens about their government. A University of Illinois class in international economics watched the debate on aid to Nicaragua. A government class at Yorktown High School in Arlington, Va., watches debates to learn about Congress. Every commercial and public television station in Alaska broadcast live coverage of the debate on the Alaska lands bill.[27]

Although C-SPAN does not have the audience that the major networks do, nor the tools for measuring the audience, there is evidence that quite a few people watch the House debates. In 1979, less than a year after the House began televising proceedings, 22 percent of the members had received letters from constituents who had seen their representatives in broadcasts from the House floor. Hundreds of thousands of viewers call C-SPAN to question political leaders or praise the network, Lamb said. One woman called to say she was thankful for C-SPAN because it kept her kids from watching soap operas in the afternoon. An older man from San Francisco called to explain how the televised debates had affected his political attitudes:

> I watch the House every time that they are on. When I first became interested in what our politicians had to say and how they presented themselves in hearings, I was flabbergasted... and I was really impressed. Since then I've done campaign work. I've written my Congressman, I've been in touch with my senator and state senator and have kept up with what's going on around the world.[28]

Opponents of Baker's resolution wonder whether people will be able to keep up with what's going on in Senate proceedings. Over the years, the Senate has developed an intricate procedural system that might confuse most television viewers. A quorum call, usually a stalling device rather than an attempt to obtain a quorum, can last as long as needed. During that time, major players on a bill can hack out a compromise. Sen. Mark Hatfield, R-Ore., told the Senate Rules Committee (April 8, 1981) that such procedures would not make sense to the television audience. He recounted how the Senate majority leader asked for a quorum call after a televised speech in the Senate by Vice President-designee Nelson Rockefeller. "I had more people say to me 'Couldn't that man see the floor was crowded? There was obviously a quorum there,' " Hartfield said.

Also, quorum calls and recesses created long delays in legislative activity. Stretches of time when nothing happens might discourage people from watching Senate debates, said Stanley Bach, specialist in American national government for the Congressial Research Service. Quorum calls could also make viewers suspicious about the private negotiations between senators, Bach said. "People are going to ask themselves 'Why couldn't I see those discussions? What was going on?' " Bach said the Senate devotes a great deal of time to deciding how to proceed on a motion, not very lively stuff for a television audience.[29]

Although the House rarely suffers the long delays or procedural preoccupation common in the Senate, there are moments a viewer might be confused by floor action. To aid the television audience, the House Administration Committee developed a guidebook explaining the House system. The book is out of print, but the Benton Foundation, affiliated with the Roosevelt Center for American Policy Studies, has produced a similar booklet. The guide to the House describes how the television system works; who sits at the Speaker's dais; what legislative terms mean; and how a bill becomes a law. Such a guidebook could be developed for the Senate, too.

Many of the opponents of televising the Senate floor have said the system requires more money ($3 million to $8 million for implementation) and more effort than it deserves. Sen. Ford based his proposal for radio coverage only on the argument that television cameras and lighting would cost too much. Moynihan pointed out on the floor (Feb. 2, 1982) that senators can address the nation by talking to television

reporters outside the chamber, or address constituents by taping a speech in the Capitol recording studio. Mathias retorted that televising the Senate would show more than a quick interview or rehearsed tape:

> It's a totally different concept than running up and repeating more or less what you said down here. It is the exchange. It is the fire in your eyes. It is the lilt in your voice. It is the kind of interest you put into what you are saying. That is what it is all about.

If tapes of Senate debates were preserved, generations could share the intimacy of the debate that Mathias described. Historians and political scientists could study the arguments that went into important decisions, said Daniel Boorstin, librarian of Congress. At the Senate Rules Committee hearing (April 8, 1982) Boorstin called the printed Congressional Record "less and less a record of what is actually going on in the Senate."

Currently, senators can change remarks before the record is published or add statements never given on the floor, Robert Warner, archivist of the United States, told the committee (May 25, 1982) that the archives would store and maintain tapes for public use. House videotapes are stored at the Library of Congress for two months and then recycled. Only the audio tapes are maintained permanently. Annotations in the written record indicate where a speech may be found on the tape.

CONCLUSION

For the third time in three years, the Senate Rules and Administration Committee sent the television resolution to the floor (June 5, 1983). The resolution was reported out of committee without a recommendation as the Senate continues to agonize about the effect televising the chamber might have on its work.

By all accounts, the House experience appears to be a good one. Members and observers have not witnessed drastic changes in the length or quality of debates. Floor attendance has remained relatively stable. The members have benefitted from better information on issues. The public has learned more about how Congress operates, even though the networks' news has largely ignored footage from the House floor. The startling predictions that came up when the House decided to go on-the-air have not materialized. The Senate should look to the House to allay its fears.

FOOTNOTES

1. Neal Gregory, "Broadcasting and the House," (September 30, 1980), unpublished manuscript, p. 4.
2. Ibid.
3. Michael J. Robinson, "Three Faces of Congressional Media," in Thomas E. Mann and Norman J. Ornstein, eds., **The New Congress** (Washington: American Enterprise Institute, 1981) p. 66.
4. Testimony of Neal Gregory, U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Rules and Administration, **Television and Radio Coverage of Proceedings in the Senate Chamber**, 97th Congress, 1st session, 1981, p. 187.
5. Ibid.
6. U.S. Congress, Senate, **Regulations to Implement Television and Radio Coverage of Senate Proceedings**, Report No. 97-506, Report of the Committee on Rules and Administration to Accompany S. Res. 436, 97th Congress, 2nd session, 1982, p. 3.
7. Melissa Gallivan, legislative aide to Senate Majority Leader Howard Baker, interview in her office, November 1982.
8. Ernie Schultz, interview in his office, November 1982.
9. Gregory, "Broadcasting and the House," p. 8. Statistics from the 1979 survey throughout this paper from Gregory's report.
10. Michael Barnes, "What the House Didn't Know About TV," **Washington Post**, April 17, 1979, p. A21, cited in Robinson, p. 69.
11. Robinson, p. 69.
12. Michael Robinson, interview in Longworth Building Cafeteria, November 1982.
13. U.S. Congress, Senate, Senator Charles Mathias, R-Md., speaking for Resolution 20, 97th Congress, 2nd session, February 2, 1982, **Congressional Report**.
14. Gregory, "Broadcasting and the House," p.11.
15. Roger Davidson, "The Impact of Televised Proceedings on the House of Representatives," Congressional Research Service, U.S. Library of Congress, May 27, 1981, p.12.
16. Don Wolfensberger, interview in his office, November 1982.
17. Davidson, p.12.
18. Don Wolfensberger, "Summary of Comparative Legislative Data for the 95th and 96th Congresses" (unpublished) p.2.
19. Wolfensberger interview.
20. Robinson interview.
21. Roger Davidson, interview in his office, November 1982.
22. Robinson lent me a copy of an anonymous manuscript he was reviewing for publication. He is now trying to ascertain the name of the author. To Robinson's knowledge and to mine, this is the only research done on the use of House footage by networks. It is, however, somewhat inadequate. The Vanderbilt index and abstracts do not indicate whether film used in a news story comes from House or network cameras. The only way to tell, Robinson says, would be to watch the news stories. The video ordered from Vanderbilt would cost a great deal, but the U.S. Archives also keep a library of network news.
23. Testimony of Carl Bernstein, Washington Bureau Chief, ABC News; and Sid Davis, Vice President and Washington Bureau Chief, NBC News, Senate Committee of Rules and Administration, April 1981.
24. Gregory, "Broadcasting and the House," p. 18.
25. Testimony of Barbara Cohen, Director of News and Information Programs, National Public Radio, Senate Committee on Rules and Administration, April 1981.
26. Brian Lamb, interview in his office, November 1982.
27. Davidson interview.
28. Caller from San Francisco, transcript of C-SPAN Call In Show, April 8, 1981, submitted to Senate Committee on Rules and Administration, May 1981.
29. Stanley Bach, interview in his office, November 1982.

Additional copies of this report, and other Freedom of Information Center reports, may be obtained by writing the Center at Box 858, Columbia, Missouri 65205. There is a $1 charge for each single copy, 90 cents each for 25 or more copies, $60 per 100 copies, and $50 per 100 on orders of 300 or more copies.